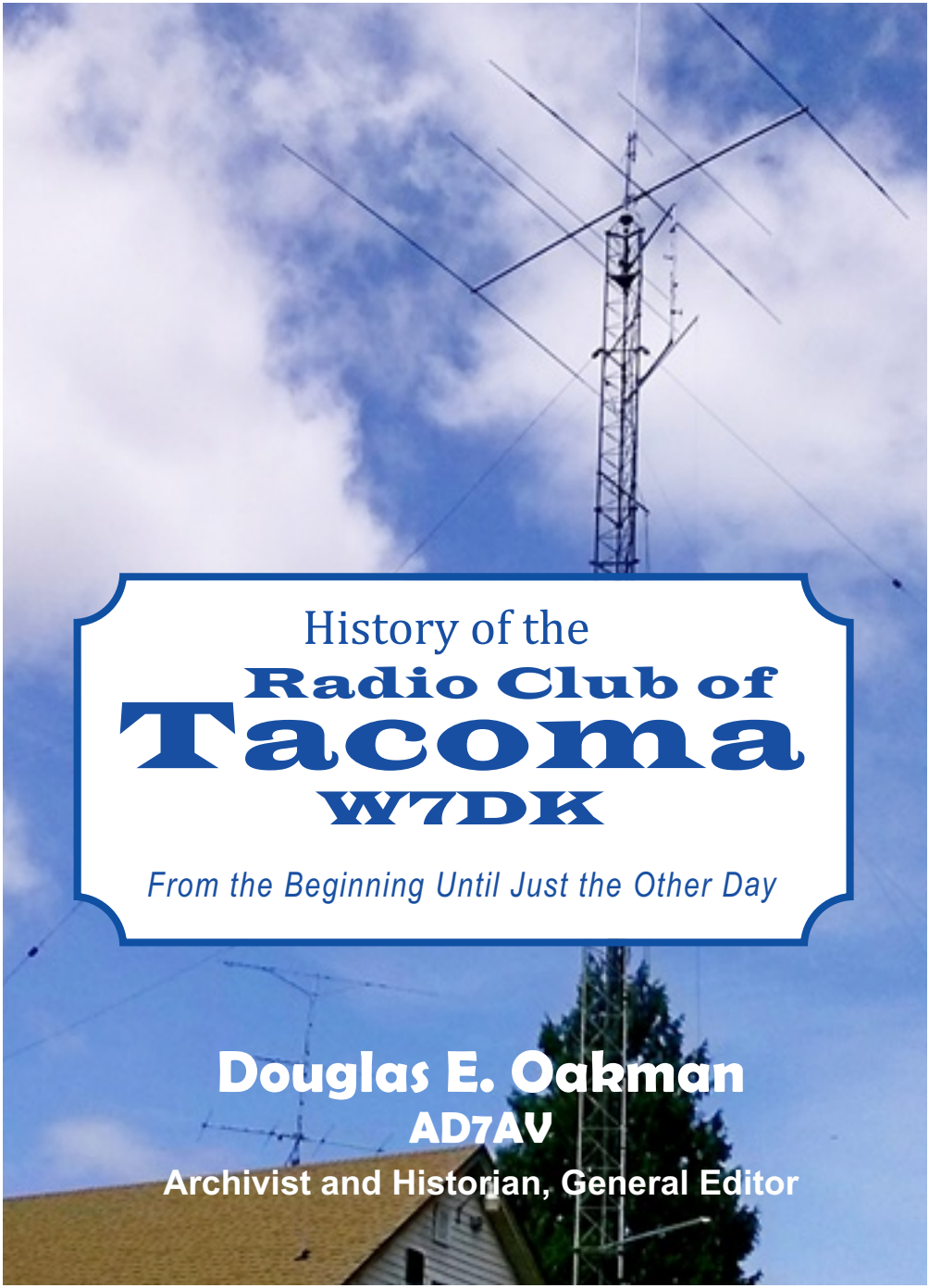

History of the Radio Club of Tacoma W7DK

From the Beginning Until Just the Other Day

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Dedicated to

Larry Watson KD4VOM

Inspirational Leader, Honorary Club Member, Officer,
Mentor - (active during years after this history).

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PREFACE

Voluntary associations rarely last for over a century. Although extremely important in people's lives, many centenary churches do not write their own histories. But the history of the Radio Club of Tacoma W7DK (RCT) closely parallels the history of radio itself and has an intrinsic community interest. Radio or wireless indeed has turned out to be one of the more important technologies in the history of humankind. For interesting accounts of background and important figures in the development of radio, the reader can turn to the books and websites listed in the bibliography. Especially valuable and accessible is this website:

http://www.astrosurf.com/luxorion/qsl-ham-history.htm

IN THE BEGINNING

Technical developments in the nineteenth century, including the study of electricity, the development of landline telegraphy, and experimentation with wireless transmissions laid the ground for ham radio. By the early 1900's, America and the world had seen the value of moving information quickly over long distances.

Just as the work of people like Samuel F.B. Morse and Alfred Vail replaced the semaphore and Pony Express with landline telegraphy, the efforts of Tesla, Fessenden, Marconi, Fleming, De Forest, and Armstrong (among many others) were moving the world into the age of wireless. One of the greater figures in the history of twentieth-century radio would be Edwin Armstrong, whose genius discovered regeneration, invented the superhet (supersonic-heterodyne) receiver, and conquered natural static (QRN) through frequency modulation.

Against this background, a small group of enthusiastic young men and women were drawn to the emerging and fascinating wireless technology. For The Radio Club of Tacoma W7DK (the original call 7DK belonged to Edward F. Drake), it began late in 1915 with eight young men meeting in each other's homes to explore the challenging new technology of radio communications. Within a year the group had formed The Radio Club of Tacoma with seventeen charter members. They developed an organizational structure and were active advocates of the new technology called "wireless" and of what would come to be called amateur radio. They met weekly, teaching code before each meeting, and theory during meetings to gain additional members; by the time World War I broke out they were up to 30 members. Four founding figures are especially notable in the club's story:

Alvin Stenso 7LB 7LV (1899-1988) – Alvin was an Honorary Life member of RCT. Most of his life was spent in or near Tacoma. He reported that painters on the nearby water tower took his antenna wire down but in a short time he was back up on there to re-anchor his antenna.

Stenso became the first treasurer of the RCT in 1916. The following year he was elected as president and served as such in 1918 and 1921. He received his first license (Second Class) in 1915 and his First Class amateur license in 1916. It was then that fifteen-year-old Clifford Spike (later "Doc" Spike W7OS) was delivering the local newspaper to 1922 South J Street – just at the foot of the "J" Street water tower upon which Al climbed to put his antenna! Spike was immediately drawn to the new club, becoming a charter member and later becoming an important club leader in his own right.

Al started construction of the commercial broadcast radio station (KGB) in Tacoma for the William A. Mullin Electric Co. and the Tacoma Ledger. The station began broadcasting on April 1, 1922. Stenso was a great promoter. On July 30, 1922, he was married to Borgheld Severtson in the radio station with the complete marriage ceremony being broadcast live from the studio. This was the first of eight marriages for Stenso. Later, he and a later wife moved into the Rogue Valley Manor in Medford, Oregon. After moving into the retirement home he re-activated his call K7LV, but soon he turned his talents to painting and carving. A few years later he was elected president of the Southern Oregon Society of Artists.

Edwin E. Moe 7AG (1898-1970) – Edwin was born in Bisbee, ND and lived in the Tacoma area since 1904. Moe was the first secretary of the Radio Club of Tacoma. He was an instructor for 25 years at the Vocational-Technical Institute of Tacoma before retiring in 1963. He was also a member of the Boilermakers Union.

Howard Grey Reichert 7HR (1896-1967) Howard was born in Belvidere, IL and moved to Tacoma in 1912. He became the first president of the club in 1916 and served as the RCT president again in 1920-1921.

Appendix 2 lists presidents as best determined from club records.

The earliest known picture of members of the Radio Club of Tacoma taken, around 1917, was at Reichert's Radio and Motorcycle Shop at South 9th and Tacoma Avenue (where the club was then meeting). He programmed the very first amateur broadcasting radio station in Tacoma, later to become KMO. Reichert retired after a career as a television and electronics engineer. He was a member of the Episcopal Church and the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers.

Dwight Allyn Mason 7DL (1898-1977)

Dwight was born in Winchendon, MA, and evidently came to the Tacoma area early in life. It is recorded in *BARK* Alumni Notes by Doc Spike that the first meeting of the Radio Club took place in Mr. Mason's home October 20, 1916 (but Al Stenso says it was fall 1915).

Mason is noted in this way in the Lincoln High School yearbook of 1917: "Dwight Mason, Eddie Rickenbacker's only rival when it comes to speeding on a motorcycle." Mason became the first vice president of the Radio Club of Tacoma. He was a salesman for the Hunt and Mottet Co. of Tacoma and later owned and operated the Vissel Lumber and Hardware Co. of Key Center. He was a member of the Tacoma Elks Lodge for many years and of the Retired Teachers Association.

The Radio Club of Tacoma and the amateurs from the Olympia club were very close in the early years. In part, this connection was because of St. Martin's Fr. Sebastian Ruth, who had established station KGY at Lacey. Father Ruth played a pivotal role in the 1916 relay network demonstration from this Lacey station.

Winifred Dow

The St. Martin's station was responsible for many young students developing an interest in amateur radio, including **Winifred Dow 7FG** (1902-2000), an early member of the Radio Club of Tacoma who became the first licensed woman amateur radio operator in the Pacific Northwest. She playfully called herself "First Girl" (after her suffix FG; after WWI she became 7CB). In the August 1917 QST, Winifred Dow's place in radio history was noted and secured:

> "With a claim to the distinction of being the first and only licensed girl operator of wireless telegraphy in the Pacific Northwest, Miss Winifred Dow of Tacoma Saturday received from the United States Government through the radio inspector at Seattle, the license and authority to operate a second-class amateur wireless station. Miss Dow, though engaged in the study and practice of wireless telegraphy for only a few weeks, has shown such a proficiency in the science that a license was granted her upon her first request. "Of a mechanical turn of mind and displaying an ability to use tools more fitted for a man's hands, she has made a great part of her wireless outfit herself, the efficiency of which is said to show in no small way her skill in handiwork. The receiving set, which is quite an elaborate affair, is enclosed in a well finished cabinet of slash grained Washington fir. The sending set, though not as powerful as Miss Dow says she would wish it to be, has, however, shown its ability to transmit good distances. The construction of a

one-kilowatt transformer is now her ambition, and with the installation of such an addition to her station her outfit will rank with the best that amateurs are allowed.

"Miss Dow became interested in wireless through her visits to a wireless station in connection with St. Martin's abbey at Lacey, Wash, one of the best and far reaching amateur stations in this district, and her insight and understanding of this branch of science, she says, is due to the Rev. Father Sebastian Ruth O.S.B., operator of that station, who has instructed and helped her in the construction and operation of her station.

"Miss Dow is 14 years old and is at present completing the eighth grade in the Visitation Academy. After her grammar grades she will take up a course of science in the high school, in the meanwhile perfecting herself in Wireless.

"Miss Dow lives with her parents and older sister Bertha, who has also shown promise of becoming an enthusiastic Wireless operator, at 2329 South K Street. The official call assigned Miss Dow is 7FG, the No. 7 denoting the district which comprises the states of Washington, Idaho, Oregon and Montana, and the letters the special ones assigned to her station."

"...the first and only licensed girl operator of wireless telegraphy in the Pacific Northwest"

WORLD WAR I

Amateur radio was prohibited during both world wars, but amateurs played their part in serving military communications. Al Stenso, for instance, served as a radio operator aboard the USS Westward Ho that was torpedoed but did not sink in the Atlantic. His SOS transmissions helped to save the ship. Meanwhile, back at home, the situation was touchy. Norman Arndt, after testing a Tesla coil for a July 4 parade, was hauled before a Navy official and accused of operating his radio illegally. Arndt was said to have had his apparatus at the Standard Hotel, "a socialist and I.W.W. headquarters" (by implication—subversive!). Karl Weingarten and Norman Arndt, because of their names, were accused of being German spies!

THE INTER-WAR PERIOD

With the Great War's end imminent, the club reconvened. The February 12, 1918 RCT minutes show the Radio Club of Tacoma's return to active operations. Elections were held and Howard Reichert returned to the helm as president; Norman J. Arndt became vice president; Neville R. Benoit, secretary; Art Reeder, treasurer; Kenneth B. Aldrich, assistant secretary and press agent. The minutes reflect that monthly dues were established at fifty cents and the initiation fee was set at one dollar.

After World War I, the American Radio Relay League (ARRL, founded 1914) re-formed in February 1919, and QST began publishing again in June 1919. Meanwhile, on **April 12, 1919, amateur receiving privileges were restored**. However, these privileges were not without threat. There were several unsuccessful attempts in congressional committees, both during and after the war, to give the Secretary of Navy permanent control of all radio in the United States. Amateur radio was in serious danger of extinction.

In an early and effective display of lobbying, the ARRL sponsored a "blue card appeal," and thousands of cards were sent in to congressional members from amateurs and their relatives. Hiram Percy Maxim, founder and president of the ARRL, personally lobbied Congress for restoration of amateur radio privileges. Support in Congress swung toward amateurs, and a joint resolution was introduced in the United States Congress calling on the Navy to release its hold on radio frequencies.

The Navy finally consented, and **amateur transmitting privileges were authorized in the U.S. in October 1919**. In fact, amateurs were only permitted to operate 200 meters and down! But these turned out to include the precious, world-wide shortwave bands! Radio operators speak of wavelengths as longer to shorter (top to bottom), hence, “Top Band” is 160 meters; frequencies go up, so the “short waves” are 3-30 MHz.

American Radio Relay League

Affiliation of the club with the ARRL came in August 1920. (September 14, 1920 minutes record club’s admittance by the ARRL). See here.

By the late 1920s, club hams had incorporated and were sponsoring regional amateur radio conventions. It was during this period that the club began to play a major role in Pacific Northwest amateur activities. The Radio Club of Tacoma sponsored annual banquets early on. In March of 1921, the Radio Club of Tacoma planned and held an annual banquet at the Knights of Pythias Hall. Over fifty amateurs from Seattle, Salem, Portland and other cities attended. A short time later in Portland, 125 amateurs including a delegation of seventeen from Tacoma proposed a Northwest Amateur Radio Association.

Northwest Amateur Radio Association

The theme of the 1922 banquet was:

“Cooperation, What it has done, and What it will do for radio”.

More than 100 Northwest amateurs from Portland, Seattle and Tacoma attended.

Gathering at the Northwest Amateur Radio Association

1st Row: Alvin Stenso; Miss A. Bowman*; Miss Mariba Klieber*; Miss Winifred Dow (Secretary); Clarence Woodward (Treasurer); Karl Weingarten (Vice President);
2nd Row: Leslie Lunan; Ten Bentz; Eric Tugby; Wilbur H Barret; Colin Murdock; Clarence Vernon; Ray Daves*;
3rd Row: Beal Mossman*; Frank Hartman; Lloyd N. Seger; H.H.Holt; C.A Dow; Wallace Fowler; George Faithful
*club records do not indicate RCT membership

Commercial Radio Broadcasting. At the same time as amateur radio was attracting new advocates, the commercial broadcasting industry was also emerging. It should come as no surprise that many of the early amateurs migrated into the commercial broadcasting world. Al Stenso, original club treasurer, and Howard Reichert, original club president, were trailblazers in Tacoma commercial radio operations. By far the most flamboyant was Al Stenso, who established Station KGB at the Tacoma Ledger newspaper office.

The first club meetings were in homes and basements, meeting in various locations. The club secured its first official meeting place in Photographer's Suite in the Argonne Building. The second meeting place was a lawyer's office in the Bankers Trust Building, and thence to the basement of St. Luke's Church. In 1921 the members joined the Commercial Club and had the use of their rooms, glad to have a more permanent location for the weekly Tuesday meeting.

A NEW HOME

In April of 1927 the club purchased three lots at the county's tax sale with the help of Karl Weingarten 7BG. By reselling a portion of the property, some 45 club members were able to start building a clubhouse at 1462 South Oakes Street. They took out a $300.00 mortgage in 1930 to finish the house, to build a station, and to put up antennas with W7DK licensed by the Federal Radio Commission at that address. On May 4, 1927 The Radio Club of Tacoma signed its original Washington State Articles of Incorporation as a public non-profit corporation. Members made good use of the station. The club's stature was increasing.

As the club cemented its role of supporting ham radio in the Tacoma community, developments were afoot to give more regulation to radio services in the United States. The Federal Radio Act of 1927 replaced the Radio Act of 1912; in turn, the Federal Communications Commission came into being in 1934.

Prefixes became required internationally in 1928, so 7DK became W7DK.

In 1931, Doc Spike was chairman of the Northwestern Division ARRL Convention put on by the club and held on August 19 and 20 in the beautiful Tacoma Hotel. It was a big affair with much publicity and nearly 200 attending. Club activities in the 1930s are well described in the following letter to the Washington D.C. Radio Club by then-secretary Lawrence Kelly:

December 12, 1932
The Washington Radio Club,
Washington, D.C.
Roy C. Cornerman, President.

Gentlemen:

Regarding your letter of November 14, 1932.

Our club was first organized in 1915 and met in various basements and garages until the present location was acquired a few years ago. A few lots were bought from the county for taxes and part of the property was sold by the club to finance the starting of the building. A mortgage was put on the property to complete the building. An initiation fee of $1.00 and dues of 50 cents per month was levied until the mortgage was paid off. The dues have since been reduced to 25 cents. We are enclosing a copy of our constitution and bylaws which were redrafted and adopted recently. These will answer your questions on organization.

Interest in the meetings is maintained by the presentation of papers by members and occasionally talks by engineers from the local plant of the telephone company. A code class for beginners is maintained. Another class, on theory, is held one evening each week. This is our main source of new members and is played up by notices in the local newspapers. Our membership numbers about forty-five at this time. Special events are held from time to time such as hamfests, skating parties at the local roller rink, auctions of used equipment donated by members etc. Right now we are in the midst of a contest sponsored by one of the supply houses in Tacoma to further amateur activities. There are prizes for winners in the various divisions of the contest.

The divisions are as follows —

The most QISHM cards received between Oct. 1st and Dec. 31st.
The most traffic handled [between ditto]
The best paper given [ditto]
The best piece of home constructed equipment
The most new members obtained
The most visitors brought to the club
The most regular attendance at meetings

The proceeds from the auctions of course go to help out the club treasury. When a skating party is put on we rent the rink and make a profit on that too. We also keep a good supply of league handbooks, “How to becomes,” log books etc. which are sold at a small profit to members. A question box is also maintained and furnishes the material for many discussions during the meetings. We try to have at least one paper every meeting. When a hamfest or card party is held the club treasury furnishes the coffee and individual members donate cakes and sandwiches.

The club transmitter and receiver was of course built by members and is under supervision of a set committee. All adjustments are made by the committee. The set committee is responsible for the proper preparation of the station. Only licensed operators have keys to the operating room. The name of operator must be signed in the log book after each transmission. We are also enclosing under separate cover one of our convention programs and a sample of the club’s QSL cards. If any additional information is desired we wish to assure you of our willingness to cooperate to the best of our ability.

Yours very truly,

The Radio Club of Tacoma Inc.
Secretary. L. Q. Kelly W7BPC

The club continued to meet weekly during the 1930s, but attendance declined and expenses grew. So when World War II was about to shut down amateur radio again, the club sold the Oakes Street clubhouse for $600 (July 19, 1939). It would be almost twenty years before the club would again secure a clubhouse.

WORLD WAR II AND THE POST WORLD WAR ERA

Once again, ham radio was shut down for the duration of the war. Numerous hams were able to offer their skills as military radio operators. Ham radio demonstrated its value in having a ready supply of such operators available in a time of world crisis. The archives of the club, for instance, show that Doc Spike was recognized and honored both by the American Red Cross and the City of Tacoma for his meritorious service during the war. During the Korean and Vietnam wars, W7DK members were active in establishing phone patches to connect soldiers to families back at home.

Important developments in amateur radio can be traced to the post-war period. Many hams converted war surplus radios to ham use. The invention of the transistor in 1947 would revolutionize radio construction, though Amateur Radio Handbooks during the 1950s and 1960s still exhibited homebrew tube radios.

Hams embraced SSB transceivers and 2-meter local communications in the 1950s. This was a rich time in the evolution of amateur practice.

Club minutes show that **the club reactivated on March 25, 1946,** with ten in attendance. Club activity revived with the members who had been involved with civil defense. They soon became affiliated with Tacoma Pierce County Red Cross and set up a station in the Red Cross Headquarters at 7th and Broadway. Meetings were held there twice a month and the first CD [Civil Defense] bus was outfitted in 1953. Matching funds from the federal government, with money from Tacoma Civil Defense, secured the vehicle. The fire department put in the wiring, generators and power distribution panel, then the club added the radio equipment. For a time club members staffed the bus to facilitate interoperability between tactical ham radio and public service radio (fire and police).

Major post-war productions took place at Field Day. Field Day outings in the late 1940s were rugged, so when club members started going to Joe Asplund's (W7IG) farm in 1951, they welcomed the covered areas and good antenna locations. They continued improving the location and the scores for thirty years at W7IG's. Club archives demonstrate the dedication to effective operating through many QSL cards and numerous awards for various special events and contests.

In 1954 the club worked hard in helping to secure “ham” license plate legislation. The Karl Weingarten (7BG) Act was passed the year Karl died; Judge William Goodloe WA7GWJ put in lots of hours in the right places, to achieve the goal.

After convening at the Red Cross, Civil Defense office, State Patrol Headquarters and wherever the club could find to meet, **the present clubhouse was purchased in 1958**. Realtor member Mel Pruitt K7ATF found the bargain property. About a dozen club members pledged the down payment of $2,200 and then the fun began. Many long days were spent making the clubhouse usable, but despite the expense of redoing the house, the membership was able to pay off the mortgage in November of 1960. Bob Heselberg K7MXE recalls that a cake was present for the mortgage-burning ceremony. In those days, the main room on the ground floor was oriented north-south rather than east-west as the classroom is today.

While both men and women held call signs, nevertheless, the Women’s Auxiliary was formed for YLs and XYLs by Irma Duncan W7OVW in the early 1950s and continued for forty years. Marge Hazelmyer, Rene Smith, Ethel Devish W7WLX, Inez Churchward W7RXT, and many others are listed in *BARK*s as holding leadership positions in the Auxiliary. Activities included social outings, contributing and operating the clubhouse kitchen, and (without forgetting to mention) radio-related fun with the men ”widowers.”

Irma Aufang Duncan W7OVW (1910-1993) – Irma obtained her amateur license in 1950. She was asked in 1950 by President Roy Devish W7AZI to form the Women’s Auxiliary. Jokingly, she said at the time that the purpose of the wives’ group was “to hatch plots on how to blow up their husbands’ equipment”! They felt that they were truly a “widows’ group.” The Auxiliary was active until 1991, with activities regularly reported in the *BARK* after 1963.

Irma was the warning officer for civil defense for two years, she was a monitor of 29.6 MHz, which was the RCT's calling frequency at that time; later she was a faithful control operator of the autopatch on 147.28 MHz. Irma worked for C & G Electronics during the 1960s — a favorite hangout for club members. After Irma's first husband Chuck Aufang W7BMG died, she married Joe Duncan. She and Joe, along with John Kelly W7KKN, formed the Pierce County River Watch still in action today. Joe and Irma especially appreciated reading the "Meet the Loggers" features in the *BARK*. Irma received the Doc Spike Award in 1987.

The Logger's Bark

RADIO CLUB of TACOMA

The club newsletter, THE LOGGERS *BARK*, was inaugurated in December 1963 and continues to this day. Margie Chavis K7AMJ played a leading role along with Ralph Rawlings W7COP, Dick Ryan W7RGD, Emil Koth K7GPK, Scotty Huntley K7CYZ, and Merl Chavis K7IKG. All worked very diligently to establish an ongoing record of club activities. *BARK*s have played a crucial role in the writing of this treatise. The first *BARK* bore an antenna masthead; the second, however, had a log with an embedded ax. It seems that "LOGGERS *BARK*" was intended to reflect the club's geographic location in (and the prevalent industry of) the Pacific Northwest.

At first, Dick Ryan produced the newsletter on a mimeograph machine donated by Max Bice W7AEA.

An offset press allowing photos and a more professional product was obtained in July 1964. Editors Emil Koth and Margie Chavis invited members to share news about equipment, homebrewing, and operating. Regular features were to include FCC and ARRL news, CW discussion, reports from the Puget Sound Council of amateur radio clubs, happenings in AREC (Amateur Radio Emergency Corps) and civil defense (including RACES).

TOC

Chuck Aufang W7BMG, along with wife Irma, was a leader in the club's RACES activities. This first issue also provided information on transmitter hunts, operation on VHF, the monthly pinochle session, the swap column, a technical column, and other items of club interest. There were even some (very) bad ham jokes and poetry. A handy calendar of events became a regular feature for many years.

The *BARK*s kept membership abreast of technical developments in radio and events in the lives of members. Members' personal goings-on were noted for some time in "Slivers and Splinters." Starting in 1965, *BARK*s also included "Meet the Loggers," brief sketches of various members. .

Margie Chavis Beechie K7AMJ (1928-2002) - Margie was a post-war leader in the Women's Auxiliary and played a key role in helping to get the *BARK* up and running in 1963. Margie's husband at the time was Merl Chavis; together, husband and wife were big contributors to club life. Besides the *BARK*, Margie put together materials for the 50th anniversary of the club in 1966. Her precious scrapbook now resides in the club archives. It provides many insights into events of the first half-century of the club and especially club members and activities from 1945 to the early 1960s.

Margie remained a *BARK* editor into the mid-1970s. In the working world, Margie worked for the Tacoma Health Department and then owned and operated The Spinning Wheel in Tacoma. Her handiwork was greatly admired at the annual fairs.

Mentioned Loggers were Steve Dightman, the Churchwards, the Chavises, Tip Caster, Russ Chryst, William Chovil, Joe Asplund, John Austin, Rich Andersen, Irma Duncan, Dave Edmondson, Darrell Erickson, Tom Gilmore, Dick Hazelmyer, Scotty Huntley, Bob Jenks, Emil Koth, Dr. Del Kohler, Jim Kelly, Lloyd Larson, Dwayne and Patty Lewis, Jim Marshburn, Roy Monroe, Hunt Mitchell, Charles ("Chip") Margelli, and Elmer Rhoads. This practice gave way later to the "Ham" or "Logger of the Month" recognition, including Elmer Rhoads, John Bonnefield, Otho Smith, Ethel Devish, Ralph Fuller, Jack Lenhart, Grace Tietzel, Tom Sutton, Kathy Wood, Ray Ernsbarger, Steve Dightman (a second notice, a very famous guy still today!), William Antes, and Eva Anderson.

Subsequently for a number of years, Doc Spike wrote “Alumni Notes.” Of course, the club’s top recognition is the Doc Spike Inspirational Award, first presented to Doc in 1974. Appendix 1 lists all Doc Spike awardees.

Clifford “Doc” Spike W7OS (1900-1991) – CQ CQ CQ DE W7OS… You know the call. Perhaps you’ve even sent it. Why does the Radio Club of Tacoma use Doc Spike’s call for our Museum station? A look through the club’s records provides many answers.

F. Clifford J. Spike was first licensed as 7CS in 1915, according to the Silent Key (SK) notice we have from the 1991 *BARK*. Finding like-minded hams, the obit tells us, he joined up as a charter member of the Radio Club of Tacoma. Between that call and W7OS in 1927, he was licensed as 7AF (his upgrade), graduated from Stadium High School, and went off to the University of Pennsylvania to study dentistry.

Returning to Tacoma, “Doc” Spike jumped right back into participation in the club he’d helped found. He was elected President in 1931, 1956, 1957, and again in 1966, not to mention holding many other offices over the years. Remembering the club’s history was clearly important to him. His “Ham of the Year” award for 1970 credits him with the SK board we all look at in the clubhouse. In addition, much of the ephemera that’s been preserved over the years is due to his stewardship. Indeed, his Loggers Certificates are just as carefully preserved in his scrapbook as his citations from the mayor and other dignitaries.

Of course, like many of us, Doc’s ham activity was not limited to RCT. While chairing the 1932 ARRL NW Division Convention, he was inducted into the *Royal Order of the Wouff Hong* in a midnight conclave. (For the uninitiated, the Wouff Hong was invented by Hiram Percy Maxim, T.O.M. (The Old Man), who surreptitiously mounted it in the ARRL boardroom as a device to punish rotten senders, lids, and other bad operators. No one knew it was Maxim’s prank til the end of his tenure! A replica like the illustration on next page hangs in the RCT

clubhouse classroom as a reminder—*everything must always be in accord with good amateur practice.*

The Wouff Hong

See http://www.amfone.net/WouffHong/wouff.htm

Doc also founded the Northwest chapter of the Quarter Century Wireless Association and served as its chairman and national representative.

Doc continued his participation in club activities for the rest of his life and was the first recipient of the award that now bears his name. Why does the Radio Club of Tacoma use Doc Spike's call for our Museum station? He was a major force in our club and in ham radio for nearly seventy-five years.

Both men and women continued to contribute actively to club life.

Roy and Ethel Devish can perhaps be remembered as a typical club husband-and-wife team. Roy Devish W7AZI (1914-1992) played numerous leading roles in club life over sixty years. He held every office in the club and was a leader on many committees. When asked how things were going, Roy was known to say "I never had it so good." Roy and Ethel Devish W7WLX (1919-2005) were featured in a 1955 Tacoma News Tribune article about their fox-hunting (hidden transmitter finding) skills. Roy contributed an important record of club history in the 1984 *BARK*, where he described club activities such as: code classes, theory classes, potlucks, skating parties, bunny [fox] hunts, pinochle, banquets, field days, hamfests, etc.

Ethel wrote detailed monthly reports for the Women's Auxiliary until its demise in 1991. When it disbanded, she reported that the group gave the club important kitchen equipment and Special Auxiliary account money. Ethel continued to write a *BARK* column called "Chips from an Old Block."

It is also important to note that women have taken other top leadership roles in the club. As Appendix 2 shows, Jean Wheeler WA7OII served as club president 1985-1986 as did Kathleen Nace N0EYK 1992-1993. In more recent years Shirley Murphy N7QHW kept the membership abreast of ARES activities and Jill Palmer K7JIL held the office of president.

THE NEARLY PRESENT TIME

Winifred Dow/Scotty Huntley

The club has continued to keep tabs on its past. The "Homecoming 1971" event brought together a number of the club's early members [November 1971 *BARK*] Pictures were taken of twelve 1916-1920 members, fourteen 1920s members, and seven 1930s members attending. At the Winifred Dow/Scotty Huntley K7CYZ Homecoming 1973, Winifred returned to receive an Honorary Lifetime Membership. [November 1973 *BARK*] In later bound *BARK*s there can be found columns revisiting club activities 25 years earlier.

Important improvements were made to the clubhouse in the early 1970s. Under the leadership of Building Committee Chair **Joe Winter** WZ7M in 1972, concrete foundation blocks were installed to level the clubhouse. Joe then served as club president in 1974.

Along with Kathy Freinwald WA7WMD, Merl Chavis W7AZI, and a dedicated crew, the upstairs part of the club building was finished and painted. Joe was also instrumental in raising the club's 80-foot tower (before the city began to prohibit anything above 35 feet!).

After hosting the Washington State Hamfest in 1968, the club began to handle regular major W7DK hamfests. These continued until just a few years ago under the able organizational work of members like Dennis Reanier W7UBA, Jerry Seligman W7BUN, and others. The club library/archives include many hamfest program books attesting to this activity.

Jerry Seligman W7BUN (1934-2006) – One of the memorable recent club movers and shakers was Jerry Seligman. Here is what was recorded about him in the ARRL archives:

> "An ARRL Life Member, Seligman was well known in the Pacific Northwest as an amateur radio 'institution,' mentor and promoter. Jerry was keenly interested in the advancement of amateur radio and particularly with the recruitment of new hams and the pursuit of their advancement to higher classes of licenses," said Chip Margelli, K7JA, a longtime friend [and, we might add, one of W7DK's own members many years ago]. "Jerry always pushed his students to learn just a little bit more, arousing their curiosity in the areas of technical ability and operating skill, and he always, above all, led by setting a good example of proper operating procedure on the air."

Seligman served as a Radio Club of Tacoma officer, including president and board member. "Jerry was active in virtually every area of club operations over forty years, perhaps serving best as the club's conscience," said an announcement on the club's website. "For many years Jerry taught an amateur radio class at Bates Vocational Technical School, and many local amateurs owe their original licenses to Jerry's efforts."

More recently he conducted the club's General and Extra class training sessions with great success. He also was an active net control and contester. [The ARRL Letter, Vol. 25, No. 34 August 25, 2006] Of course, Jerry's Collins-powered N7PP regularly acquired "Clean Sweeps" during November Sweepstakes and could handily beat many a pileup during an international contest. Jerry's powerful transmissions got into every TV on the block and kept W7DK TVI experts very busy in those days!

Jerry kept the club regularly informed on ARRL and FCC proceedings. The upper floor operating room in the clubhouse is dedicated to Jerry in appreciation of his equipment donations and contributions to the club.

UNTIL JUST THE OTHER DAY

As the 1960s gave way to the 1970s, tube radios and radio kits gave way to all-solid-state rigs. The 1980s witnessed the advent of personal computers and with them packet radio and new digital modes. Members like Roger Nace K7AYC provided technical articles in the *BARK* on these developments. As the twentieth century moved toward a close, ham radio seemed as alive and vibrant as ever. Ham licensing tests were transferred to the province of Volunteer Examiners rather than the FCC. Soon after the dawn of the millennium, Morse Code would no longer become a rite of passage for Novices, and understanding the interface between computers and radios, or radios and the Internet has ushered in a new age for amateur radio.

Over the last century close to three thousand registered members have enjoyed and participated in this vital association called The Radio Club of Tacoma. Members have spanned the spectrum between white collar and blue collar backgrounds, between the professional and working worlds, between technical engineering and human services callings. In 2016 the club celebrated its centennial, and in 2020 it is celebrating its affiliation of over a century with the American Radio Relay League.

In the span of this club's lifetime:

- ✔ **Spark-gap to software defined radio!**
- ✔ **14-year-olds to centenarians!**
- ✔ **CW to sundry modes of voice and digital!**
- ✔ **"Ether" to moonbounce and space station!**

Select resources for this club history

1917 *QST* article on Ms. Winifred Dow 7FG

2006 ARRL notice for Jerry Seligman W7BUN

Archives of The Radio Club of Tacoma — especially Al Stenso scrapbook, Doc Spike scrapbook, minutes, attendance registers

Interviews with Worth Gurley, Bob Heselberg, Rich and Arlene Manson, Steve Dightman, Nick Winter

Materials gathered for a Radio Club of Tacoma of Tacoma 90th Anniversary documentary video by Larry Watson KD4VOM, Peter Baker AD7EU, and Al Ferguson N7OMS

Margie Chavis Beechie, "The Radio Club of Tacoma: The Early Years." 50th Anniversary scrapbook, 1966

Newsletter *THE LOGGERS BARK* (1963-Present) — with special help from Roy Devish W7AZI,

"Looking Back," *BARK 21*.10 October 1984

Obituaries from The Tacoma News Tribune

Select publications for the history of radio

Lee de Forest, Father of Radio: The Autobiography of Lee de Forest, Wilcox & Follett, 1950.

Desoto, Clinton, *200 Meters & Down: The Story of Amateur Radio*. American Radio Relay League, 1985.

Lessing, Lawrence, *Man of High Fidelity: Edwin Howard Armstrong*. Bantam, 1969.

Lewis,Tom, *Empire of the Air: The Men Who Made Radio*. Harpercollins, 1991.

Schumacher, Alice Clink, *Hiram Percy Maxim, Father of Amateur Radio*, Schumachers, 1970.

Appendix 1
Doc Spike Awards

1974 Clifford Spike W7OS
1975 Gerald Seligman W7BUN
1976 Marvin Wheeler WB7ONX
1977 Jack Haworth WB7AJR
1978 Jack Haworth WB7AJR
1979 Steve Dightman K7SSC
1980 Scotty Huntley K7CYZ
1981 Dick Ryan W7RGD
1982 Dick Ryan W7RGD
1983 Roy Kilgore N7BXI
1984 Tom Sutton N7DRT
1985 Jean Wheeler WA7OII
1986 Jean Wheeler WA7OII
1987 Irma Duncan W7OVW
1988 Newt Grimes WN7L
1989 Gerald Seligman W7BUN
1990 Jeff Freeman K7JF
1991 Ken Moak WA2JQW
1992 Shirley Murphy N7QHW
1992 Carl Rosevear KB7LIG
1993 Ray Pederson W7KFN
1993 Kathleen Nace W0EYK
1994 Bill Shimmin W7GBC
1995 Jim Kirkreit K7YLM
1995 Brian Spindor KA7KUZ
1997 Lou Simmons KB7WDB
1997 Worth Gurley W7WG
1998 Al Churchill KC7YGC
1998 Pete David KK7QW
1999 Nora Simmons KC7JME
2000 Rich Manson N7ANF
2001 Morel Guyot W6LIX
2002 John Robson AC7LK
2003 Jill Palmer K7JIL
2004 Ed Root KC7OKS
2005 Rich Patrick KR7W
2006 Mick Pier KK7QS
2006 Nick Winter K7MO
2007 Al Ferguson N7OMS
2008 Rick Rose KE7EMW
2008 Larry Watson KD4VOM
2009 Harry Adams W7HSA
2010 Stephen Morton AD7AB
2011 Steve Blacksten AD7VL
2012 Bruce Hanson WE7P
2013 Randy Myers WB4SPB
2014 Mike Finnie W7MWF
2015 George Salisbury K7GRS
2016 Steve Dightman AF7YD
2017 Mike Drorbaugh W7MKE
2018 Adam Barbera W2NCC
2019 Red Cranefield WB7EC

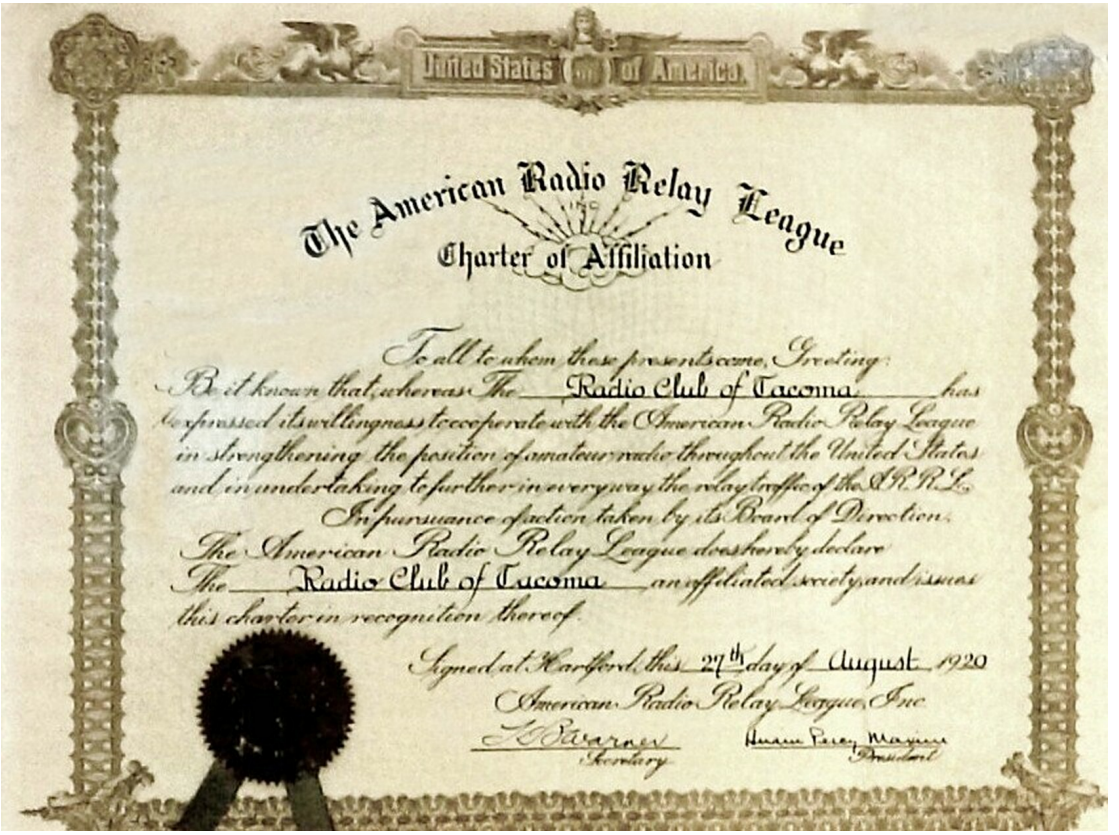
Appendix 2
RCT Presidents

Note: Records before the BARK are not entirely complete or consistent

1916 Howard Riechert 7HR
1917 Al Stenso 7LV
1918 Al Stenso 7LV
1919 H. J. Reichert 7HR
1919 Lester O'Brien 7EV
1920 Neville Benoit 7BC
1920 Leslie Lunan 7LL
1921 H. J. Riechert 7HR
1921 Al Stenso 7LV
1922 H. J. Reichert 7HR
1922 Eric Tugby UNKNOWN
1922 Karl Weingarten 7BG
1923 Frank Tovey 7DB
1924 George Miller 7MJ
1924 George Beckett UNKNOWN
1925 Claude Butler 7GB
1925 Melville McCulloh W7DCP
1926 F. J. Todd 7GB
1926 Karl Weingarten 7BG
1927 L. A. Dix 7AU
1927 F. J. Todd 7GB
1928 J. A. Carlisle UNKNOWN
1929 R. G. Olson W7UW
1929 L. A. Dix W7AU/7AU
1930 Howard Reichert 7HR
1930 Karl Weingarten W7BG
1931 Doc Spike W7OS
1931 Conrad Ganes W7AAX
1932 Doc Spike W7OS
1933 F. M. Dodge W7AAB
1934 ??
1935 Karl Weingarten W7BG
1935 ??
1936 Lloyd Norberg W7EHQ
1937 Lloyd Norberg W7EHQ
1938 Carl F. Hoffman W7EPB
1938 Karl Weingarten W7BG
1939 Karl Weingarten W7BG
1939 Carl F. Hoffman W7EPB
1940 Everett Cutting W7HC/7HC
1941 Bob Lawson UNKNOWN
1941 Karl Weingarten W7BG
1942 WWII
1943 WWII
1944 WWII
1945 WWII
1946 Reorganization on March 25
1947 ??
1948 C. W. Aufang W7BMG
1948 Ernest Ripoli W7NIL
1949 Roy Devish W7AZI
1950 Roy Devish W7AZI
1951 Carl F. Hoffman W7EPB??
1952 Alex Braidwood W7AZR
1953 Ernest Ripoli W7NIL
1954 Roy Devish W7AZI
1955 Bob Churchward W7RXS
1956 Doc Spike W7OS
1957 Doc Spike W7OS
1958 Max Bice W7AEA
1958 Roy Devish K7AZI
1959 Mel C. Pruitt K7ATF
1960 Otho E. Smith K7ATD
1961 Jerry Seligman WYFS/7
1962 Charles L. Nee W7WPN
1963 Cal Morgan W7SFT
1963 Charles L. Nee W7WPN
1964 Merle Chavis W7IKG
1965 Jerry Seligman W5YFS
1965 Doc Spike W7OS
1966 Doc Spike W7OS
1967 Roy Devish W7AZI
1968 Ed Coles K7CZM
1969 George Abbott WA7BHH
1969 Bob Gates K7IND
1970 Bob Gates K7IND
1971 Dennis Reanier W7UBA
1972 Len Goodwin WA7HHI
1973 Len Goodwin WA7HHI
1974 Joe Winter WA7RWK
1975 Bill Deathridge WA7SCN
1976 Jack Haworth W7AJR
1977 Jack Haworth WA7AJR
1978 Bob Titzel WA7ZZA
1979 Doug Smith WA7ZPK
1980 Roy Richards N7ARO
1981 Cal Morgan W7SFT
1982 Cal Morgan W7SFT
1983 Bob Teitzel WA7ZZA
1984 Marv Wheeler KG7V
1985 Jean Wheeler WA7OII
1986 Jean Wheeler WA7OII
1987 Scotty Huntley K7CYZ
1988 Don Hutt WB7BLQ
1989 Tom Sutton WV7V
1990 Jeff Freedman K7JF
1991 Jeff Freedman K7JF
1992 Kathleen Nace N0EYK
1993 Kathleen Nace N0EYK
1994 Jim Kirkreit K7YLM
1995 Jim Kirkreit K7YLM
1996 Mike Crawford WB7DFQ
1997 Mike Crawford WB7DFQ
1998 Roger Terwilliger WA7ANJ
1999 Roger Terwilliger WA7ANJ
2000 Alan Hughes KB7SVU
2001 Mick Pier KK7QS
2002 Mick Pier KK7QS
2003 Mick Pier KK7QS
2004 Mick Pier KK7QS
2005 Mick Pier KK7QS
2006 Mick Pier KK7QS
2007 Randy Thompson KK7FF
2008 Jill Palmer K7JIL
2009 Jill Palmer K7JIL
2010 Jill Palmer K7JIL
2011 Gary McAdams WG7X
2012 Gary McAdams WG7X
2013 Gary McAdams WG7X
2014 Gary McAdams WG7X
2015 Gary McAdams WG7X
2016 Gary McAdams WG7X
2017 Dave Ellison W7UUU
2018 Dave Ellison W7UUU
2019 Dave Ellison W7UUU
2020 Dave Ellison W7UUU

Appendix 4
Charter Members

0001 Ferdie Anderson 7CY
0002 Norman J. Arndt 7AK
0003 Richard H. Cook 7RC 7CE
0004 Edward F. Drake 7DK 7DD ~RCT Club Call W7DK
0006 Herbert Ellington Call Unknown
0007 B. C. Ganer 7AW
0009 Harold Hicklen 7HY
0010 Channcy James 7CM
0011 Clifford E. Johnson 7AI
0012 Chester R. LaMont 7CK 7CX W7ALM
0013 Harold D. Longmire 7HL 7CH
0015 Dwight A. Mason 7DL ~First RCT V/president
0017 Robert (Bob) Minshell 7KM
0018 Edwin E. Moe 7AG ~First RCT Secretary
0020 Charles Nicholson NO CALL
0021 George A. Nelson 7NH 7BT
0022 Bert Noll Jr. NO CALL
0023 Bert Noll Sr. NO CALL
0024 Glen Paulson NO CALL
0025 Ardis H. Reeder 7GQ
0026 Howard G. Reickert 7HR 7CE ~First RCT President
0027 Merle C. Richards 7BA 7ER
0028 F. Clifford J. Spike 7CS 7AF W7OS
0029 Alvin Stenso 7LV 7LB ~First RCT Treasurer
0030 Anton R. Tingstad 7NF
0031 Karl Weingarten 7BG



United States of America

The American Radio Relay League

Charter of Affiliation

To all to whom these presents come, Greeting:

Be it known that, whereas The Radio Club of Tacoma has expressed its willingness to cooperate with the American Radio Relay League in strengthening the position of amateur radio throughout the United States and in undertaking to further in every way the relay traffic of the A.R.R.L.

In pursuance of action taken by its Board of Direction, The American Radio Relay League does hereby declare The Radio Club of Tacoma an affiliated society, and issues this charter in recognition thereof.

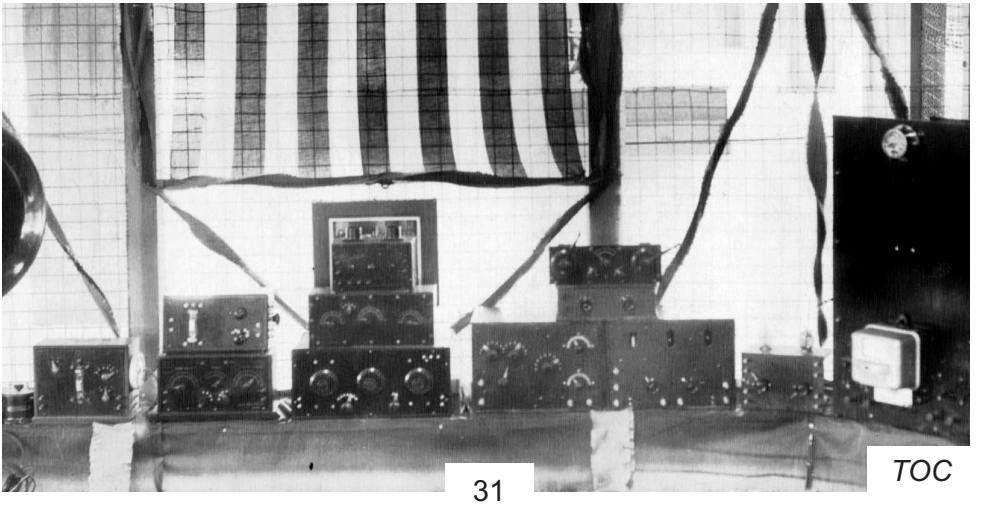
Signed at Hartford, this 27th day of August 1920

American Radio Relay League, Inc.

S. B. Warner, Secretary — Hiram Percy Maxim, President

Above: ARRL Charter of Affiliation granted August 27, 1920

Below: RCT Entry in 1921 Tacoma Industrial Trade Fair



Merl and Margie Chavis (p 21)

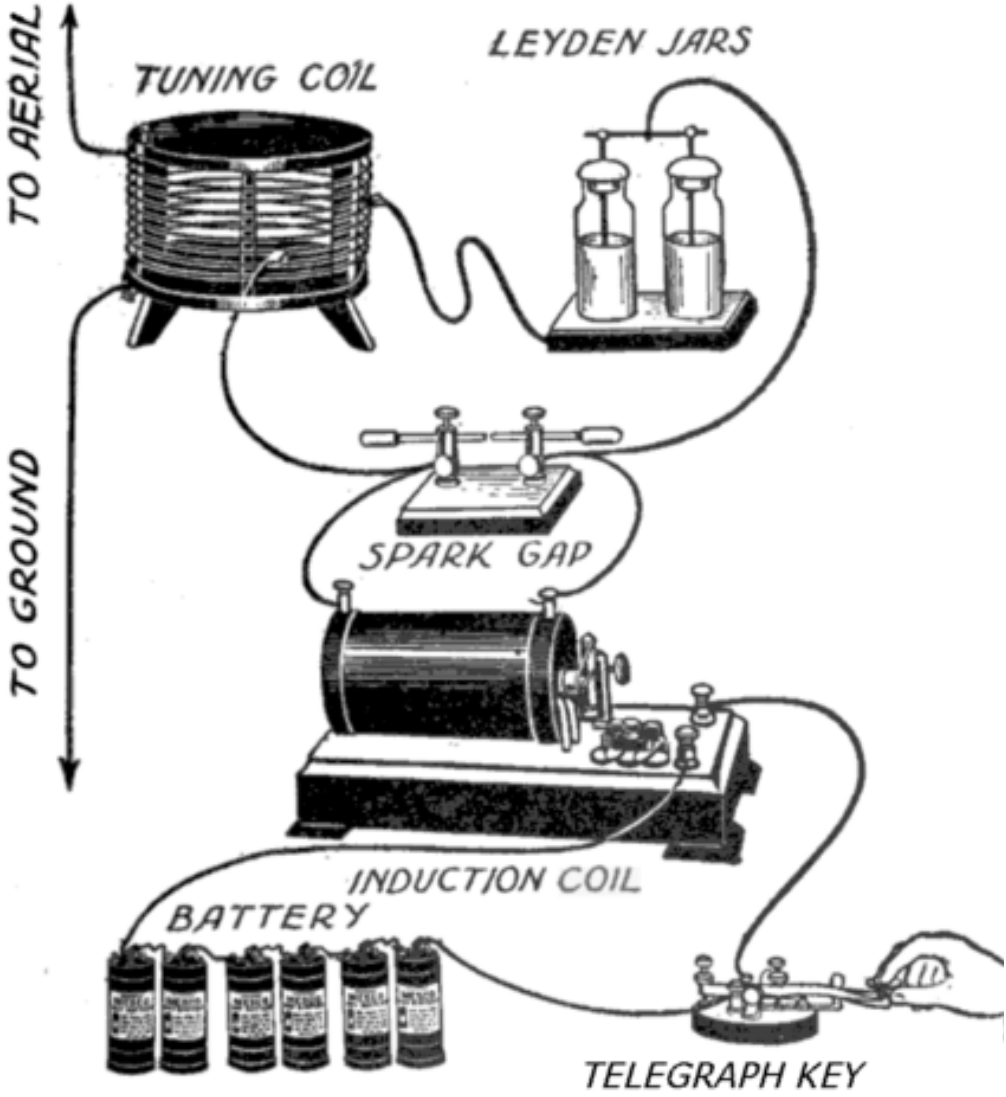
Roy and Ethel Devish (p 23)

TOC

Jerry Seligman W7BUN (p 25)

Joe Asplund W7IG

Pool of Generators used for Field Day at Joe and Helen Asplund's Farm during the 50s



Them wuz the days...!

The Radio Club of Tacoma, begun in 1916 by a small group of high school enthusiasts of the newly-birthed field of “wireless,” is one of few radio clubs to have spanned a century. Still alive today and—notably—in possession of property and clubhouse complete with an antenna farm featuring an 80-foot tower populated with Yagi beams and wire antennas.

Led by visionary men and women, the club has been a source of education, service, and enjoyment for members spanning ages in the teens to over a hundred!

Affiliated with the ARRL and cooperating with ARES, the RCT is a Special Service Club for the community, well-equipped for everything from classroom instruction to Field Day to local or national emergency service.

Pierce CountyARES
When All Else Fails

Dr. Douglas E. Oakman, Professor of Religion and erstwhile Dean of Students, Pacific Lutheran University, has been a member of the Radio Club of Tacoma since 2002 and has spent the past eighteen years developing the two Radio Club of Tacoma Libraries as Chief Librarian.